

Lesson # 1 What Would Life Be Like in a State of Nature

Used in conjunction with Lesson # 1 of We the People, pgs. 2-6

The Case of the Unruly Bride and Groom

Overview: The students will read the story below. They will then answer questions provided. After they answer the questions on their own, they will break up into small groups of 3 or 4 people and discuss their answers. Then, they will come together as a class and share their answers for class discussion.

Objective: At the end of this lesson students should be able to do the following;

- 1.) Identify what “State of Nature” means
- 2.) Identify and give examples of the natural rights of life, liberty and property
- 3.) Determine if natural rights are absolute
- 4.) Identify the concept of “social contract” or “social compact”
- 5.) Explain what consent and tacit consent are.
- 6.) Recognize examples of the social contract in our daily use.

Materials needed: Story, paper and pens.

Here is the story:

You just had an amazing wedding at a very fancy hotel. It ended at midnight, but you have had so much fun you want it to continue. You invite the last 30 fellow inebriated folks up to your suite to partake in more festivities. The hotel manager arrives at your door at 12:30 AM stating that some guests were complaining because of noise, and asks you to keep it down. That lasts for about 10 minutes. The manager arrives again and warns that he’ll have to toss you out of the hotel if you continue. You tell him everything’s under control and it is quiet again for another 10 minutes. At 1:00 AM the manager shows up at your door with 2 police officers and says it’s time for you to leave. You protest vigorously. In fact, the police decide they need to arrest you. As you’re being led off in handcuffs, you look at the manager and say, “Hey, I paid for the room, I should be able to do whatever I want.”

Assessment: The answers the students wrote for the activity can be collected. It might be wise to give students some time to rework answers if their opinions were changed. Also, the terms social contract, consent, natural rights, absolute rights, tacit consent and state of nature can be used in a future quiz. Short answer questions about consent, state of nature and social contract can also be used.